

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2004/03/16 : CIA-RDP81B00401R002400100010-7
5 October 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : PB/NSC Coordinator
SUBJECT : "Leak" on Soviet Brigade (C)

1. The following is based on an informal inquiry:

- a. 24 August (Friday): Draft NID article sent to NSA, DIA, INR for coordination
- b. 27 August (Monday): NID article published on Soviet Brigade (TAB A)
- c. 30 August (Thursday)

- (from [redacted]). Al Marsh, Congressional Correspondent of Aviation Week & Space Technology (AW&ST) called DoD's Public Affairs Office at about 1300 and asked to speak to someone about Soviet troops in Cuba

- Marsh was referred to a Col. Sam Floca, PA's Caribbean man
- Floca was not in so Marsh left a request with a secretary requesting comment on a report that there were 2000-2500 Soviet troops in 2 cantonments in Cuba. He noted he needed to get a response very soon as he had a deadline to make
- Marsh's call was never returned by Floca or anyone else. The matter was passed up to the DepSecDef's office

- (from Jerry Bremer, State). At about 1450 the same Al Marsh called David Newsom's office to check out a story re Soviet troops in Cuba

- Marsh said he had a story of a CIA report completed 26 August
- Said he understood there were Soviet troops with 1 armored battalion, 1 artillery battalion and 2 motorized rifle battalions, with a total strength of 2500 men

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- Said he understood the purpose of this force was to firm up Cuban troops
- Said his understanding was that this was contrary to the US understanding that only Soviet advisors would be in Cuba
- He asked for comment
- No one ever returned his call
- It was after these calls (indicating that the story of the "Brigade" was out) that the frantic activity took place which led to the notification of Sen. Church et al
- It was that night that Church made his statement which was reported in the press the next (Friday, 31 August) day. (S)

2. Information on Soviet military activities in Cuba was also reported in the DINSUM on 29, 30, 31 August and 2 September. (See TAB B for copies of these articles.) (Comment: These are much more fulsome disclosures of what was known and what the evidence was than any NID article.) (S)

3. Discussions with Don Gregg provided the following insights:

- NSC has a long-standing belief that the NID is a basic source of information used by "leakers" (Therefore nothing should be in the NID that one wouldn't want leaked)
- When the 27 August NID article appeared there was concern that it would be leaked. Don was tasked to find out how it got in. He talked to someone here and was told that the article was approved for publication by DCI.
- Don is unaware of any NSC inquiry or facts to suggest that it was in fact this NID article that was leaked re the Brigade issue. In fact he volunteered that so much had been discussed by so many people prior to the article itself that it would be difficult to point to this article as the sole source of information on the Brigade.
- Nevertheless, this incident reinforced basic prejudice against the NID. (S)

4. David Binder's 13 September article in the N.Y. Times refers to AW&ST having obtained a copy of the 27 August NID piece on the Brigade on 29 August. (See TAB C.) (U)

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5. AW&ST ran an article in their 10 September issue (TAB B). This is hard to source since the Administration (via Church) went public on the 30th. (C)

6. Comments

a. On source of AW&ST query.

- Based on what Marsh (AW&ST) is reported to have solicited comment on, it appears more likely that he heard or was told something than that he read or had the NID article
 - There are things in the NID article that he would have been likely to have asked about (e.g. the term "brigade;" reference to a Soviet Colonel, the field training, Candaleria, Santiago, etc.)
 - His "understandings" about what the US-Soviet agreements were
 - His understanding as to the purpose of the Soviet troops

These things suggest (to me) that he had been talking to someone(s), and whether that person(s) was relying on the NID, or DINSUMs, or SIGINT Summaries, or something else is not clear.

- The actual AW&ST article does not contain anything specifically attributable to the NID. It obviously contains a lot of information but much of it came from the public statements of various officials (although much of the technical detail suggests, as usual, that they are wired in (to DoD!?!)).
- Only Binder states that AW&ST got the NID article on the 29th.

b. On issue of intelligence publications

- As noted above, the extent and nature of detail in DINSUMs would seem to warrant more concern about distribution than that being accorded the NID. (S)

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Attachments: As Stated

Distribution:

Copy 1 - DCI

-3-

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BRIEFS AND COMMENTS

NID
27 AUG 1979

USSR-CUBA: Soviet Brigade

Recently obtained information has strengthened earlier indications that a Soviet ground forces combat unit is stationed in Cuba. The unit, called a brigade by the Soviets and commanded by a Soviet Army colonel, has probably been in Cuba since at least 1976. The brigade probably is more than a skeleton unit, and parts of it may be based at more than one location. It apparently consists of at least one tank battalion and probably two motorized rifle battalions--plus various combat support and service support units. We have no information on its mission. The brigade's presence may be intended as a gesture of Soviet military support for Havana at a time when substantial numbers of Cuban troops are abroad. [REDACTED]

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The brigade has been conducting field training since July 1976. [REDACTED]

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Soviet Brigade: How the U.S. Traced It

By DAVID BINDER
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12 — The United States Government received indications of the presence of a Soviet combat brigade in Cuba through overhearing the Russian word "brigada" in radio monitoring in 1975 and 1976, intelligence officials said this week.

A year ago, the Carter Administration received information, this time more specific, from radio interceptions, that a Soviet combat force designated as a brigade was garrisoned in Cuba, but it did not pursue the matter, the intelligence officials said.

It was not until the Carter Administration began to worry last spring about Cuban military involvement, through training and arms supplies, in the Nicaraguan revolution and in insurgencies in Grenada and El Salvador that it called upon the intelligence agencies to examine the Soviet military role in Cuba more closely.

How Dispute Developed

In interviews over the last week with officials in the White House, Defense and State Departments, the Central Intelligence Agency and Congress, the emergence of the Soviet brigade as an intelligence problem and a political issue developed in this way:

Surveillance, stepped up in March and April, was intensified again in July and still again in August, ultimately producing what intelligence officials called "confirmatory evidence" — a chance reference in a monitored Russian radio message to a "maneuver" by the "brigade" scheduled for Aug. 17.

On that day, a camera satellite orbiting high over Cuba trained a powerful lens on a small area a few miles southwest of Havana and "sure enough," an intelligence officer recalled, "there was the brigade on maneuver with tanks, personnel carriers and mechanized infantry."

The radio signal had been a Soviet request to the Cuban Army for permission to use the San Pedro maneuver grounds, a few miles west of Havana's José Martí International Airport, to exercise the "brigade" composed of a rocket battalion, a tank battalion and two infantry battalions — totaling 2,300 to 3,000 men.

Well-Camouflaged Area

San Pedro is several miles west of a large Soviet military complex where there is a well-camouflaged storage area as well as a headquarters commanded by a Soviet major general. The mile-square complex, called Lourdes, also includes large dish-shaped radar receiver terminals at a site called Torrens for intercepting communications from American missile tests and from the

On Aug. 20, three days later, other American satellite photographs showed San Pedro empty and military equipment being stowed away at Lourdes. The troops and officers, it was determined, were garrisoned at two military camps nearby — the larger part eight miles east of Lourdes at Santiago de las Vegas, and the smaller one 11 miles to the east at Managua.

However, what began as a rather routine intelligence collection exercise has become a political issue centered on demands for linking the removal of the Soviet troops and approval of the nuclear arms treaty. Other aspects of the dispute involve United States prestige in the hemisphere, Soviet behavior in the overall East-West relationship and the question whether there was an "intelligence failure."

Despite intense concentration in recent weeks by intelligence officials and policy makers, and searching inquiries posed through diplomatic channels to the Soviet Union, many questions remain unresolved.

The Mysteries Remain

Among the mysteries is how long the Soviet brigade has been stationed in Cuba and what its mission is. Last week the Soviet Embassy advised the State Department that a Soviet military advisory group had been in Cuba since 1962, had not changed in size or role and was the only Soviet military formation on the island. This has prompted some American analysts to wonder whether the advisory group has a double mission of training Cubans and forming up as a combat unit on occasion.

As for the suburban Havana facilities at Lourdes, Santiago de las Vegas and Managua, a senior intelligence official said, "We've known about those installations since Havana for years and have changed through the years."

Last week in an interview, Maj. Gen. George J. Keegan, a former Air Force intelligence chief, recalled having seen reports about the Soviet combat force "five or six years ago," but added that at the time he and other Pentagon officials were unable to persuade the State Department or the Central Intelligence Agency to focus attention on it. "We sort of forgot about it," he said.

Last week both former President Gerald R. Ford and his Secretary of State, Henry A. Kissinger, issued statements asserting that they had never seen intelligence reports indicating the presence of a Soviet combat force in Cuba in their time in office, which ended in 1976. According to intelligence officials, the bits and pieces of information assembled on the brigade in earlier years never were substantially linked in the intelligence community, much less to policy makers.

One of the problems appears to have been semantic, since American military specialists repeatedly pointed out that a "brigade" was an abnormality in the Soviet Army and, as one remarked: "We said what should not be can not be."

A Demonstration Brigade?

Now some of the American intelligence experts have begun to speculate that the brigade's primary mission was to demonstrate combat techniques in the brigade configuration of rocket, tank and infantry units used by the Cuban forces in Africa in recent years.

Somewhat parallel to this surmise is the idea that the Soviet unit may well have been in place for more than a decade, but that its "mission changed in the 1970's," as a Defense Department official put it, possibly in support of Soviet utilization of Cuban troops as proxy forces to reinforce leftist governments in Angola, Ethiopia and Southern Yemen.

The intelligence officials are still sifting the mass of signal interceptions, photographs and a few reports from the handful of American agents still available in Cuba, which they have accumulated about the Soviet command structure on the island.

They say there are also looking into files, much of them stored in computers, in an effort to trace the brigade's origins and to determine whether it was separate from the advisory group left over from the 1962 missile crisis. It is a classic intelligence operation in which old pieces of information that had no meaning when they first came to light suddenly acquire significance and help from a pattern of activity that makes sense. "But we still don't know how far back it goes and we're still not sure of all our facts," a top-ranking intelligence official said.

The intelligence officials, from the C.I.A., Defense Department and White House, have struck a defensive note in reviewing the actions that finally led to the discovery of the brigade. They contend on the one hand that they still do not consider it militarily significant and on the other hand that, until recently, they had been too busy concentrating limited technical surveillance resources on other more crucial targets to accumulate adequate information on the Soviet troops in Cuba.

These arguments were carried into hearings begun today by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on whether there was, as some of the panel members asserted last week, "an intelligence failure" surrounding the discovery of the Soviet troops.

"I think our people are very pleased," an official said of the intelligence performance. "It was a team effort."

"Our resources are finite," he added in reference to the photo satellites. "You can only turn on the birds for so long or they wear out. The Russians know that, too."

As for the San Pedro maneuver discovery, he said it had been made more difficult by the fact that the Soviet Union had "pretty much re-equipped the Cubans so it's harder to tell who is driving the equipment." He said the Russians had also taken unusual measures to conceal their high degree of radio silence.

This official added that a year ago photographic surveillance of the Cuban military was limited to twice a month. Electronic monitoring was also restricted. This was stepped up last month to daily surveillance.

Role of Senator Stone

But just as the intelligence community had spent months and even years looking at the brigade without seeing it, so the Carter Administration's top policy makers also had difficulty facing the issue once the Soviet combat presence in Cuba began to emerge. But they had been given an early warning by Senator Richard Stone.

In January 1973, the Florida Democrat had asked President Carter to state American policy on Soviet military activities in this hemisphere and received a reply, made public at the time, that said:

"In particular, it has and will continue to be the policy of the United States to oppose any efforts, direct or indirect, by the Soviet Union to establish military bases in the Western Hemisphere."

In April, in the midst of the revolutionary activities spreading among Caribbean and Central American countries, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security adviser, sent a memorandum asking Adm. Stansfield Turner, Director of Central Intelligence, to start a large-scale study of Soviet military activities in Cuba and Cuban military activities elsewhere.

One result of the study, which is still incomplete, was a report by a National Security Agency analyst of radio interceptions from Cuba that there was indeed a Soviet combat formation stationed near Havana, probably as a "brigade." That report was completed in June.

On July 17, according to Mr. Stone, a Senate staff aide fugged his sleeve as he was about to enter a Foreign Relations Committee hearing on strategic arms and told him about the National Security Agency report.

Senator Stone strode into the committee room during the second week of hearings on the strategic arms treaty signed with the Soviet Union in June. He asked Defense Secretary Harold Brown, who had prepared himself thoroughly on the treaty, but not on Cuba, what he knew about a Soviet brigade.

Perplexed, Mr. Brown replied that he was not aware of a change of Soviet military activities in Cuba. Pressed by Mr. Stone and by Senator Frank Church, the Idaho Democrat who heads the committee, Mr. Brown authorized them to issue a statement saying that aside from a military advisory group, "our intelligence does not warrant the conclusion that there are any other significant Soviet military forces in Cuba." The report was virtually lost in the welter of press accounts dealing with the Carter Cabinet and the treaty deliberations.

But Senator Stone was not satisfied. The next day, he asked Vice President Mondale to increase surveillance of Cuba, a request that was passed on to the intelligence community.

This represented the third increase in surveillance since spring, after a call by the National Security Council in March for an estimate of Soviet ground forces in Cuba, and Mr. Brzezinski's April request for a more general report on Soviet-Cuban relationships.

Asked today why the Carter Administration had not focused a year ago on the intelligence reports of a "brigade" instead of many months later, a White House official said, "We were interested at the time, but they were just snippets and later there was a larger accumulation of information."

Florida Senator Persists

Senator Stone, whose state lies 90 miles from Cuba at Key West, the closest point, continued to press for results, writing to President Carter on July 24.

Yet even though the intelligence accumulation on the Soviet combat force was building up, Senator Stone was advised in a letter from Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance on July 27, at the direction of President Carter, that "our intelligence does not warrant the conclusion that there are significant Soviet forces in Cuba."

Senator Stone immediately termed this "a whitewash."

A second letter from the Senator to the President on Aug. 19 appears to have had the effect of souring still more intense technical surveillance of Cuba. In any case, Mr. Carter ordered "the highest priority" of reconnaissance about this time, the fourth increase since March, and the one that finally paid off with the decisive radio interception and the maneuver photograph.

But again, the Administration appears to have had difficulty translating its intelligence into useful political action.

Stone Gets Phone Call

By Aug. 24, exactly a week after the maneuver photograph of the troops was taken, an interagency task force concluded that the Soviet brigade did exist and was indeed a combat unit with a known command structure. David D. Newsom, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, called Senator Stone in Tampa, Fla., to tell him he was prepared to brief him on his "assertions" about the brigade.

The Senator said in an interview that he begged off, saying he did not want to be briefed "on the telephone" and would prefer to hear Mr. Newsom's account on his return to Washington after Labor Day. He also recalls that he spent part of the day in Florida with President Carter, who, incidentally, had been briefed about the brigade's maneuver the day before, but that the President never raised the subject.

The State Department was content to let matters stand as they were, a high-ranking Administration official said, until after Congress returned to Washington Sept. 4. That was the day Mr. Newsom set for briefing Senator Stone.

The National Intelligence Daily, an Administration document widely circulated in the Government and Congress mentioned the brigade maneuver. Two days later, a copy evidently came into the hands of Aviation Week & Space Technology, whose editors began calling Administration officials for confirmation.

Quandary for Administration

This put the Administration in the position of having the information appear in the press before key members of Congress could be briefed.

As a result, the State Department leadership decided to call Senator Church, who had issued the July 17 statement on the strength of Harold Brown's authority that there was no Soviet brigade in Cuba. On Aug. 30, Mr. Newsom reached Senator Church in Idaho and told him what was known. Senator Church then called Secretary Vance and Senator Stone saying he was going to make it public.

However, Senator Church stunned Secretary Vance and other Administration officials by coupling the disclosure with the demand that the Soviet Union remove the brigade, a public ultimatum with which the Administration and the Soviet Union are still wrestling.

"It's all political now," a senior intelligence official said today with a sigh and a thin smile of relief. "We've done our job."

USSR Cuba Force Clouds Debate on SALT

U. S. officials insist brigade-size troop unit constitutes no offensive threat, but senators link removal to treaty

By Clarence A. Robinson, Jr.

Washington—Public reaction to the presence of a brigade-size Soviet force—including satellite communications experts—based in Cuba is becoming a significant new element in Senate debate on whether Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty 2 should be ratified.

The fate of the strategic arms agreements may hinge on the success of the Carter Administration in forcing the USSR to withdraw its troops from the island.

U.S. officials said last week that the Russian forces in Cuba are positioned there for several reasons, but that none of them are believed for offensive excursions in the Western Hemisphere because the Russian brigade is at the end of the Soviet supply line. Reasons for basing the force in Cuba are believed to include:

- Protection of a wide range of Soviet early warning radar equipment and a satellite control and monitoring station for reconnaissance and early warning space-

craft over the Western Hemisphere. A Soviet satellite ground facility is located at Torrens, near Pinar del Rio.

- Use of an armored and defensive artillery battalion to defend Soviet MiG-23 Flogger air defense interceptor and MiG-27 strike fighter aircraft operating in Cuba with Soviet pilots.

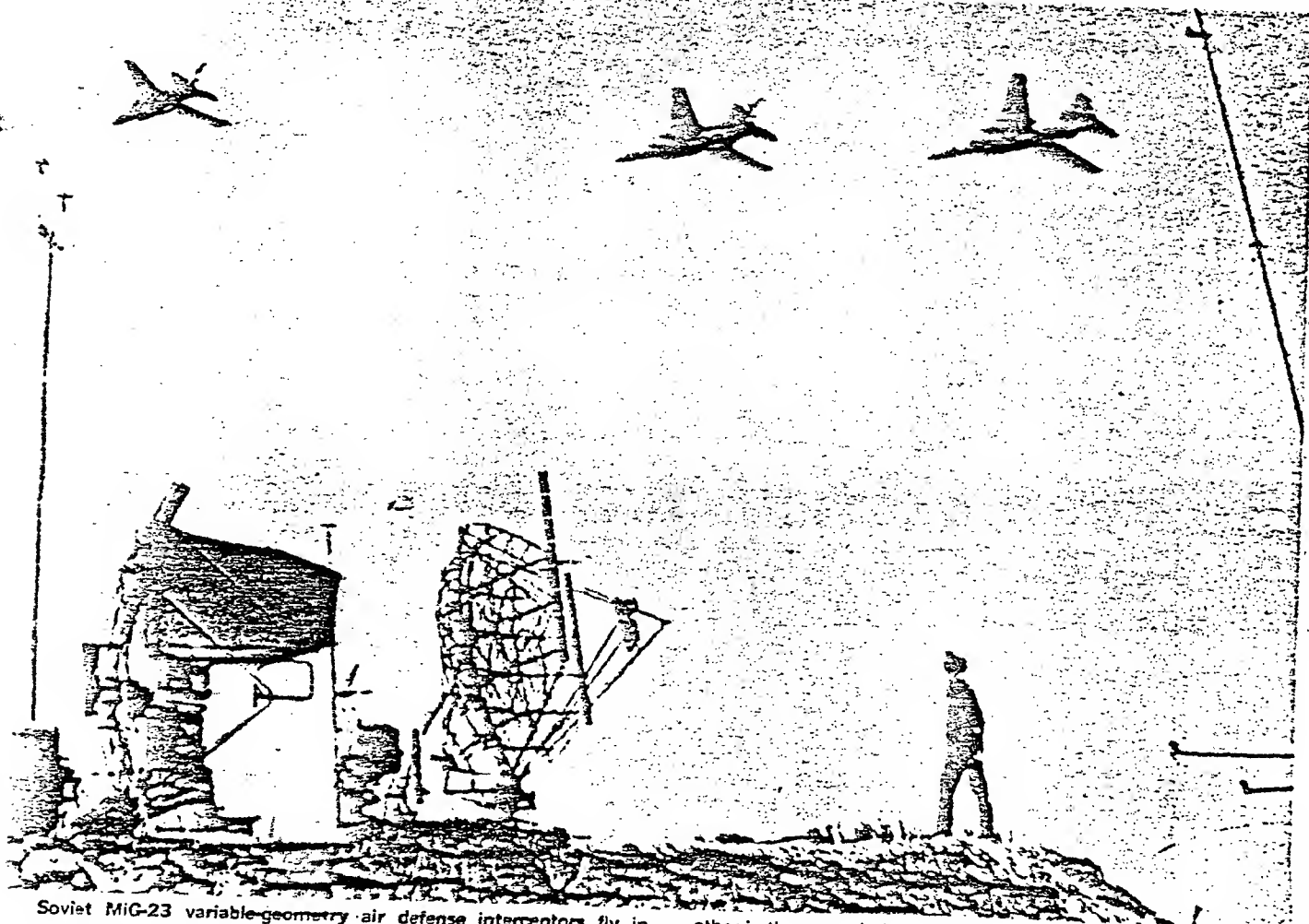
- Training Cuban forces by conducting combined Soviet-Cuban army operations to improve the combat performance of

Cuban forces, considered less than adequate in some African battles.

- Demonstration to Third World nations that the balance of power has tipped in favor of the USSR. U.S. experts believe it will be difficult if not impossible to get the force removed, making it a symbol of Soviet freedom of action and thus providing a psychological effect in Central and South America.

- Defense of large dish type antennas associated with electronic intelligence. The location and composition of equipment operated by the Soviets in Cuba is to intercept International Telecommunications Satellite Organization traffic from the spacecraft over the Atlantic Ocean. The Defense Dept. rents channels on the spacecraft for communications.

U.S. officials are blaming President Carter for the inability of the intelligence



Soviet MiG-23 variable-geometry air defense interceptors fly in formation above USSR/East German Long Talk surveillance and precision approach radar antennas. The radar system also is known under the NATO code name of Two Spot. Soviet pilots are based in Cuba (awast Nov. 2, 1978, a 19,000 sq mi area). Flogger aircraft—one squadron flying air defense fighters and the

other in the ground attack role equipped with MiG-27s, a version of the MiG-23 known as the Flogger D. The Flogger has been designed to carry nuclear ordnance and has a range of 750 naut. mi. unrefueled, enabling it to strike areas of the U.S. Southeast from Cuba. The U.S. has been unable to detect the presence of nuclear weapons for MiG-23s in Cuba.

CONTINUED

agencies to pinpoint the location of the Soviet ground combat brigade in Cuba until late August. They said Carter personally ordered a halt to all USAF/Lockheed SR-71 reconnaissance flights over the island by the Strategic Air Command within 10 days after he took office in 1977.

Soviet Gammon Missile

The only air defense missile that has the capability to down the SR-71M with its Mach 3 plus speed is the Soviet SA-5 Gammon, and none is believed based in Cuba. Over the years, 810 Soviet-made air defense missiles have been fired at SR-71s, with none scoring a hit.

Satellites cannot cover Cuba continuously because of cloud cover even though the new KH-11 can transmit electronic images to East Coast ground terminals, and SR-71 flight cancellations caused the intelligence failure, the officials emphasized.

Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance reconfirmed last week earlier State Dept. announcements that a combat brigade from the Soviet Union is located in Cuba. That move by Vance closely followed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's postponement early last week of hearings on ratification of SALT 2 until Administration officials appeared before the committee to testify on the Soviet brigade in Cuba.

Soviet Presence Disclosure

Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), chairman of the committee, who has been in favor of the SALT 2 ratification, revealed the presence of the Soviet brigade in Cuba while on a visit to his home state during the congressional recess.

The senator, who is considered a liberal based on his voting record, faces a conservative in his reelection bid next year. Sen. Church indirectly linked SALT 2 with the Russians in Cuba and scheduled the hearings on that subject. After hearing Administration witnesses last week, including Vance and Adm. Stansfield Turner, Central Intelligence Agency director, the committee decided to resume SALT 2 ratification hearings this week, with the markup on SALT 2 scheduled next week.

Sen. Church warned that the Senate may not accept Cuba being turned into a Russian base, and that SALT 2 could be rejected or modified unless Soviet troops are removed.

The State Dept. called in the Soviet charge d'affaires to express its concern over the Soviet ground force unit on Aug. 29.

Sen. Richard Stone (D-Fla.) scored the Administration over the Soviet unit in

Washington—Soviet Union is assisting the Cuban navy in a buildup of its forces with large-scale construction of a new pier and other facilities at Cienfuegos, a Soviet port of call on the Caribbean side of the island 150 mi. southeast of Havana.

In the past, Soviet nuclear-powered and diesel-electric attack submarines carrying cruise missiles of a type known to be armed with nuclear warheads have made calls to Cienfuegos (AWAST Dec. 15, 1975, p. 18). U. S. officials said last week it is clear the Russians intend to continue their naval presence in Cuban waters. There have been 19 Soviet flotillas in the Caribbean in the last decade.

Pentagon officials said the Soviets have turned over at least one Foxtrot submarine to the Cuban navy. It is armed with torpedoes and does not carry cruise missiles. Other U. S. naval experts said the Russians are preparing to give some improved versions of the Foxtrot boat to Cuba, and they may turn over some Juliet-class submarines being phased out of the Soviet navy. The Juliet boats are armed with four SS-N-3 Shaddock antiship cruise missiles.

The first Foxtrot submarine was sent to Cuba in early February, and an older Whisky-class submarine was towed to Cuba in April for use as a training vessel.

In mid-February, the Soviets turned over to the Cuban navy two hydrofoil patrol boats armed with torpedoes and guns. The boats are modified Turya-class displacing 250 tons with a foilborne speed of 30 kt.

The construction at Cienfuegos is believed by U. S. intelligence officials to be in preparation for additional Soviet naval hardware for Cuba as well as facilities for Soviet use during calls to the island by surface and submarine vessels.

Cuba. He said last week that the brigade must be removed or that his vote on SALT 2 may be against the ratification. He said he believes the Russians are testing U. S. resolve and have positioned troops in Cuba to apply pressure on El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, which the Soviets want to add as client states.

Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), the Senate minority leader, said the existence of the Soviet unit in Cuba is Russian nose-thumbing at the U. S. Sen. Baker said the Soviets are really saying that the U. S. should ratify the treaty even though it gives the USSR a significant advantage in strategic weapons, and to cap it off the Soviets sent 3,000 combat troops to Cuba. "I find that astonishing," Sen. Baker said.

Former astronaut Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio), who has raised concerns over whether the SALT 2 agreement can be adequately verified, used the presence of Soviet troops in Cuba to question verification again and whether the Central Intelligence Agency can monitor Soviet actions under SALT 2. Sen. Glenn alluded to congressional CIA budget cuts and questioned not only the capability to monitor Soviet SALT compliance, but also U. S. intelligence gathering capabilities in Cuba and elsewhere in the world. Without adequate SALT verification, treaty ratification is unlikely, he believes.

White House officials maintained that the Soviet brigade poses no threat to the U. S., but they agreed that it could threaten the SALT 2 ratification process.

While the Soviet unit in Cuba does not appear to violate any formal agreement with the USSR, it is a public issue, one U. S. official said, "and politicians are sensitive to public reaction. Sen. Church has taken a turn to the right—at least for

unusual position of finding the senator to the right of Cy Vance."

U. S. intelligence agencies came under harsh congressional criticism after Sen. Church revealed the Soviet brigade's location in Cuba. On July 17, Defense Secretary Harold Brown, in response to questions on the Soviet military personnel in Cuba during a closed session of the Foreign Relations Committee, said there is no evidence of a substantial increase in the size of Soviet forces there. "Apart from a military group that has been advising the Cuban armed forces for 15 years or more, our intelligence does not warrant the conclusion that there are any other significant Soviet military forces in Cuba," Brown told the committee.

U. S. intelligence analysts in early August began detecting the deployment of some Soviet forces in basic cantonment areas in Cuba, but there was no clear indication that a brigade-size force had been moved in and assembled, according to one Pentagon official. He added that it appeared at first that Russian military advisers were conducting maneuvers "as one might expect."

A discussion continued within the intelligence community until several days before Sen. Church's announcement that the Soviet force in brigade strength was now operating in Cuba. U. S. intelligence officials intercepted Russian and Cuban communications that for the first time referred to the brigade as an entity.

The discovery was made when communications were intercepted using the Air Force's Seek Skyhook tethered-balloon radar surveillance system operating from Cudjoe Key, Fla., 18 mi. east northeast of Key West.

The U. S. operates electronic intelligence receivers on the balloons manufactured under subcontract to

Westinghouse, which also produces the radar system. The balloons operate at an altitude of 12,000 ft. to conduct radar surveillance of Cuba about 150 mi. away. The system can observe Soviet aircraft taking off from bases in Cuba, according to U. S. officials. The system also can be used to provide data to customs officials on any traffic in or out of Cuba from sea level to high altitude.

The Seek Skyhook system is in operation 24 hr. a day using several balloons in order to keep at least one always aloft. The balloons are very large—approximately the size of the Goodyear blimp, U. S. officials explained.

While the U. S. observes Cuba and monitors communications, the Cubans and Soviets conduct similar operations against the U. S. "Cuba is to the Russians what Iran was to the U. S. until the Shah's regime was toppled," one high-level U. S. official said. He explained that the Soviets operate a string of early warning radar sites known by NATO code name of Tall King.

The system is designed to work with tactical interceptor aircraft rather than air defense missiles. The Tall King radar has a range of more than 350 naut. mi. The system operates at 160-180 MHz. and can detect targets up to 140,000 ft. altitude. It usually operates with a companion height finder radar called Side Net.

The Soviets also have quietly introduced the SA-3 Goa air-defense missile into Cuba. This surface-to-air missile system has an excellent low-altitude detection capability with a capability from 150 ft. to 60,000 ft. The missile has a minimum range of 1½ mi. and a 12-mi. maximum range. The Low Blow missile control radar operates at a frequency of approximately 9 GHz. and has high clutter resistance. It is commonly used with two acquisition radars code named Flat Face and Squint Eye.

"There is no evidence of any significant increase of Soviet presence in Cuba other than those forces generally associated with the defense of Soviet equipment, support

and maintenance," one high-level Administration official said last week. He added that USSR equipment is positioned there as a reward for Cuba's surrogate role, and that Soviet aid to the island totals around \$1 billion per year.

"This is no ominous new threat to the U. S. The USSR goes by the book when deploying forces, and this is the package set requirement for a unit sized to defend Soviet installations: artillery, armor and armored personnel carrier units along with air defense elements," the official added.

In comparison with the deployment of two squadrons of MiG-23s last year, the official considers the brigade presence in Cuba militarily "a tempest in a teapot."

Vance said last week the Carter Administration regards the presence of the Soviet brigade in Cuba as a very serious matter, "affecting our relations with the Soviet Union." He added that the presence of the unit runs counter to long-held U. S. policies.

The secretary of State said the presence of the unit had "recently been confirmed by our intelligence community." He added that U. S. intelligence had concluded that the unit has been in Cuba since the mid-1970s, and that older, fragmentary data in the light of new information suggest that elements of a Soviet brigade may have been there since the early 1970s.

Vance said the unit appears to consist of 2,000-3,000 personnel and includes motorized rifle battalions, tank and artillery

battalions along with combat service units. He stressed that these figures are separate from an estimated 1,500-2,000 military advisors and technical personnel in Cuba.

Vance emphasized there is no air or sealift capability associated with the brigade that would give it an assault role.

The Administration held a top-level meeting last week on the issue of the brigade.

The meeting was limited to cabinet-level officials including Brown, Vance, Turner and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski in the form of a presidential review committee. Its decision, according to some White House officials, was to await the Soviet reaction to the U. S. protest.

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